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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.		
10/713,789	11/14/2003	Alastair James Buchanan	1-24912	8772		
46582	7590	04/28/2009	EXAMINER			
MACMILLAN, SOBANSKI & TODD, LLC ONE MARITIME PLAZA - FIFTH FLOOR 720 WATER STREET TOLEDO, OH 43604				MANCHO, RONNIE M		
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER				
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/713,789	BUCHANAN ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	RONNIE MANCHO	3664	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 January 2009.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-14 and 16-23 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-14 and 16-23 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

1. In view of the appeal brief filed on 1/26/09, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED as set forth below.

To avoid abandonment of the application, appellant must exercise one of the following two options:

(1) file a reply under 37 CFR 1.111 (if this Office action is non-final) or a reply under 37 CFR 1.113 (if this Office action is final); or,

(2) initiate a new appeal by filing a notice of appeal under 37 CFR 41.31 followed by an appeal brief under 37 CFR 41.37. The previously paid notice of appeal fee and appeal brief fee can be applied to the new appeal. If, however, the appeal fees set forth in 37 CFR 41.20 have been increased since they were previously paid, then appellant must pay the difference between the increased fees and the amount previously paid.

A Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE) has approved of reopening prosecution by signing below:

/KHOI TRAN/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3664

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the claimed "*a path estimation apparatus, a first data processing apparatus, a second data processing apparatus*" must be

shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s), emphasis added. No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

4. Claims 1-5, 7-23 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in

the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

In claim 1, the specification has no support for the different claimed processors.

Applicant in the response filed 1/26/09 used element 104 to represent a path estimation apparatus, and the same element 104 as a first data processing apparatus, and the same element 104 as a second data processing apparatus. Thus the claimed limitations are not supported in the specification to enable one skilled in the art to make and use the invention.

The rest of the claims are rejected for depending on a rejected base claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claims 1-5, 7-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sawamoto et al (EP 0890470 A2).

Regarding claim 1, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose a target vehicle sensing apparatus for a host vehicle, the apparatus comprising:

a lane detection apparatus provided on the host vehicle which includes an image acquisition apparatus configured adapted to capture an image of at least a part of the road ahead of the host vehicle (col. 6, lines 10 et. seq., line 33);

a vehicle path estimation apparatus configured to estimate a projected path for the host vehicle (e.g. col. 7, lines.28 to 54, abstract);

a target vehicle detection means located on the host vehicle which is configured to identify the position of any target vehicles located on the road ahead of the host vehicle (Figs. 3&4), the position including data representing the distance of the target vehicle from the host vehicle (col. 5, lines 50-54);

first data processing apparatus configured to predict a target lane (abstract, fig. 3 and 4) in which the host vehicle will be located when it has traveled along the projected path by the distance to the target vehicle (col. 9, lines 14-44 et. seq., fig. 7);

second processing apparatus configured to compare the position of the target vehicle determined by the target detection apparatus with the position of the target lane to provide a processed estimate of the actual position of the target vehicle (col.7, lines 38 et seq., col. 9 lines 43 et seq.).

In the prior art (col. 9, lines 46 to col. 10, line 11) the processor 62 clearly predicts the position of the host vehicle in a future path. The processor 62 predicts" the future path of the host vehicle relative to a target vehicle when the host vehicle has traveled a distance between the host vehicle and the target vehicle (see particularly col. 9, line 51 and col. 10, lines 5-11).

Regarding claims 2, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 1 in which the processed estimate comprises an indicator of whether or not the target vehicle is in the same lane as the host vehicle is projected to be in when the host vehicle has traveled along the projected path by the distance to the target vehicle (col. 2, lines 47-57; col. 9, lines 16-53; col. 10, lines 5-24).

Regarding claims 3, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 1, in which the image acquisition apparatus of the lane detection apparatus comprises a video camera 54 (fig. 3) which is configured to produce at least one two-dimensional image of an area of the road in front of the host vehicle (col. 6, lines 33-41).

Regarding claims 4, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 1 in which the at least one image is passed to an image processing unit 55 (fig. 3).

Regarding claims 5, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 4 in which the image processing unit is configured to filter the at least one image to identify artifacts in the image corresponding to at least one of the right hand edge of a road, the left hand edge of the road, lane markings defining lanes in the road (col. 4, lines 29-47; col. 7, lines 7-12), the radius of curvature of the lanes and the road, and the heading angles (steering angle, col. 6, lines 31, 32) of the host vehicle relative to the road and lanes.

Regarding claims 7, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 4 in which the image processing unit is configured to apply an edge detection algorithm to the at least one image to detect lines or curves that correspond to lane boundaries.

Regarding claims 8, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 7 in which the image processing unit is configured to perform a tracking algorithm which employs a recursive least squares technique to identify the path of lanes in the at least one image.

Regarding claims 9, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 7 in which the output of the image processing unit comprises data representing lane topography which is passed to the first data processing apparatus (cols. 5-8).

Regarding claims 10, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 9 in which the output of the image processing unit also includes information including the position of the host vehicle relative to the identified lanes and its heading (cols. 5-8).

Regarding claims 11, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 7 in which the first data processing apparatus is configured to determine which lane the host vehicle will occupy when it has traveled the distance to a target vehicle by projecting the path estimated by the vehicle path estimation apparatus and comparing the path estimated by the vehicle path estimation apparatus with lane boundary information at that distance (cols. 5-9).

Regarding claims 12, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 7 in which the vehicle path estimation apparatus is configured to use lane information to determine which lane the host vehicle is presently traveling in (cols. 3-8).

Regarding claims 13, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 7 in which the vehicle path estimation apparatus may estimate the path by projecting a path based upon the heading of the host vehicle (cols. 3-8).

Regarding claims 14, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 12 in which the projected path corresponds to the path of the lane (cols. 5-8).

Regarding claims 16, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 1 in which the vehicle path estimation apparatus includes a yaw sensor which is configured to determine the rate of yaw of the host vehicle in order to provide a measure of the radius of curvature of the path a vehicle is following (cols. 5-8).

Regarding claims 17, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 1 in which the target vehicle detection apparatus comprises an emitter (see radar unit 2, fig. 3) which

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emits a signal outward in front of the host vehicle and a receiver which is configured to receive a portion of the emitted signal reflected from the target vehicle or objects in front of the vehicle, and a target processing apparatus which is configured to determine the distance between the host vehicle and the target vehicle or object (cols. 3-8).

Regarding claims 18, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 17 in which the emitter and the receiver emit and receive one of radar signals and lidar signals (cols. 3-8).

Regarding claims 19, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the apparatus of Claim 17 in which the distance between the host vehicle and the target vehicle or object is determined by the target processing apparatus based upon the time of flight of a signal from emission of the signal to receipt of a reflected portion of the signal (cols. 3-8).

Regarding claims 20, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose an adaptive cruise control system for a host vehicle comprising:

sensing apparatus according to Claim 1 and signal generating apparatus configured to generate a steering bias signal which when applied to a steering system of the vehicle assists in controlling the direction of the vehicle so as to cause the host vehicle to track the target vehicle (see vehicle following unit, cols. 3-8).

Regarding claims 21, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the control system of Claim 20 in which the signal generating apparatus generates at least one vehicle speed control signal which when applied to a brake system or a throttle control system of the vehicle cause the vehicle to maintain a predetermined distance behind a target vehicle (cols. 3-8).

Regarding claims 22, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the control system of Claim 20 in which at least one of the signals is generated in response to the estimate of the target position determined by the sensing apparatus (cols. 3-8).

Regarding claims 23, Sawamoto et al (abstract) disclose the control system of Claim 20 in which the control signals are only generated for target vehicles that occupy the projected path of the host vehicle (cols. 3-5).

Response to Arguments

7. Applicants' arguments filed 1/26/09 have been fully considered, but are not persuasive. The 112 second rejections to claim 6 have been vacated in view of applicant's cancellation of the claim.

Applicant's arguments are a repeat of arguments that had been addressed in the last office action dated 2/6/08. The arguments are still not convincing. For purposes of clarity, the response to applicant's arguments is reprinted below for applicant's review.

Applicant argues that claim 1 recites, "a target lane that is a prediction of which lane the host vehicle will be located when it has traveled by a distance to a target vehicle along a projected path. The target lane is compared to the position of the target vehicle". The examiner disagrees and notes that in the prior art (col. 9, lines 46 to col. 10, line 11) the processor 62 clearly predicts the position of the host vehicle in a future path is predicted. The processor 62 predicts the future path of the host vehicle relative to a target vehicle when the host vehicle has traveled a distance between the host vehicle and the target vehicle (see particularly col. 9, line 51 and col. 10, lines 5-11). Applicant has ignored and failed to consider the cited sections which

anticipate the claims. Further, the positions of host vehicle and the target vehicle in the predicted lane are plotted in successive times t₁, t₂, t₃, etc indicating a progression of the vehicles as they travel into the future in the predicted lane. The host vehicle is shown to maintain a distance behind a target vehicle as both vehicles travel in the predicted lanes. As the host vehicle moves from its current position toward a target vehicle, it is noted that the target vehicle also moves ahead of the host vehicle to another position ahead of the host vehicle. The host vehicle then covers the distance of separation between the host vehicle and the target vehicle after the host vehicle travels to a position previously occupied by the target vehicle. The host vehicle tracks the target vehicle and keeps a historical map of positions occupied by the target vehicle in the predicted lane of travel thus estimating or predicting the future travel path of the target vehicle (see col. 9, line 51 and col. 10, lines 5-11).

The applicants are repeating arguments already addressed in the previous office actions. The responses in the last action are incorporated below. After the host vehicle of the prior art goes past the distance it maintains the same lane it is in. Therefore the prior has predicted a target lane in which the host vehicle will be located when it has traveled along the projected path by a distance to the target object. It is believed that the applicant has erred in the interpretation of the prior art.

Applicant further argues that the prior art does not predict the target lane. The examiner believes the applicant has erred in the interpretation of the prior art. It is noted that the prior art predicts in the same manner as disclosed in the applicants specification. Applicant uses the word "predict" in the disclosure, but does not particularly disclose how prediction is done. On the other hand, as known in the art, the phrase -- path estimation --, --projected path -- are examples

of prediction that the applicant recites in the background section referring to the prior art. Applicant admits that the prior Sawamoto calculates a future path, see applicant's remarks, page 9, last paragraph. It is not clear what applicant is really arguing here when applicant admits that the prior estimates a path. The applicant further recites that the prior assumes that "the host vehicle WILL TRAVEL in this new lane". See applicant's argument page 11 last two sections. These are all future tenses contrary to applicant's argument that the tenses in Sawamoto are in present tense.

It is believed that the prior art still reads on the claims. The rejections are believed to be proper and thus stand.

Communication

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to RONNIE MANCHO whose telephone number is (571)272-6984. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs: 9-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tran Khoi can be reached on 571-272-6919. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Ronnie Mancho
Examiner
Art Unit 3664

4/27/2009

/KHOI TRAN/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3664